Having described the invention, we claim:

- 1. In a data communication system having a plurality of mobile transceiver units communicative with a plurality of base transceiver units,
  - a network controller intercommunicative between the base transceiver units and one or more host computers for data interchange therebetween, and having port means providing interface at a relatively low data rate and at a relatively high data rate.
- The network controller of claim 1 wherein said controller includes means for interconnection of existing installed mobile transceiver units therewith.
- The network controller of claim 2 wherein
   said controller communicates with said base transceiver units by an RS232C interface.
- 4. The network controller of claim 1 wherein said network controller providing a multiplicity of data communication ports thereon, at least two of said communication ports being software-controllable to select among a plurality of interface means.
- 5. The invention of claim 4 wherein at least one of said communication ports being communicative with a network of serially interconnected base transceiver units over a single twisted pair.
- 6. The invention of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of said mobile transceiver units are communicative with said base transceiver units by spread spectrum means.
- 7. The invention of claim 1 wherein

  at least a portion of said mobile transceiver units are communicative with said base

  transceiver units by synthesized frequency radio means.

- The invention of claim 5 wherein
   said network of base transceiver units is operable over an RS485 interface.
- 9. The invention of claim 1 wherein
  - said network controller providing a multiplicity of data communication ports thereon, at least three of said communication ports being software-controllable to select among a plurality of interface means
  - at least two of said at least three communication ports being selectively controllable to communicate by RS232, RS422, RS485, and V.35 means.
- 10. In a data communication system having a multiplicity of mobile portable transceiver units communicative by radio means with base transceiver units,
  - apparatus for data interchange between said base transceiver units and a host computer comprising,
  - a housing having a multiplicity of communication ports thereon,
  - at least three of said communication ports selectively controllable to provide data interchange by an RS232 interface,
  - at least two of said communication ports selectively controllable to provide data interchange by a RS422 interface.
- 11. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein,
  - at least one of said communication ports selectively controllable to provide data interchange by a V.35 interface.
- 12. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein,
  - said at least two communication ports are selectively controllable to provide data interchange by a RS485 interface.
- 13. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein more than one host computer may be interconnected to

said data communication system.

- 14. The apparatus of claim 10 wherein,
  - a number of said multiplicity of communication ports are dedicated to interconnection to host computers and the remainder of said communicative parts are interconnectable with base transceiver units.
- 15. An improved apparatus for collecting, transmitting, and processing data stored in a code such as a bar code, said apparatus including a portable code reader with processing and transmitting units for radiating information in the form of electromagnetic waves, a stationary receiver physically separated from the code reader, and a data processor coupled to the stationary receiver, wherein the improvement comprises:
  - a network controller member having a multiplicity of communication ports thereon, said network controller member intercommunicative with said data processor at one of said communication ports,
  - said network controller member intercommunicative with said stationary receiver at another of said communication ports,
  - said network controller member selectively operable with said data processor at one or more communication rates.
- 16. The invention of claim 15 wherein
  - said network controller member selectively operable with said stationary receiver at one or more communication rates.
- 17. The invention of claim 15 wherein
  - said network controller selectively intercommunicative with a diagnostic device over one of said communication ports.
- 18. The invention of claim 15 wherein

a second data processor associated with said network controller and intercommunicative therewith.

- 19. The invention of claim 15 wherein a multiplicity of stationary receivers intercommunicative with said network controller.
- 20. The invention of claim 15 wherein said network controller selectively operable to communicate with said data processor at more than one data transfer rate.